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30 STATES, UTs SEEK SHORTER CBSE CLASS XII BOARD EXAMS

Except Delhi and Maharashtra, all other states have written to the Centre saying these tests are crucial for students' future

HOLDING EXAMS RISKY: DELHI, MAHARASHTRA

According to Delhi and Maharashtra, allowing gathering at examination centres could cause massive risks of infection to students and teachers and these tests could turn into superspreader events. The other states also asked the Centre to organise shorter, 90-minute exams for all subjects, in which most questions will be objective or short answer types

EXAMINATIONS TO RESULTS IN 45 DAYS

- "Most states are in favour of conducting shorter versions of tests for all subjects and completing the process from examination to results within 45 days," said an official
- The official added if the tests are taken at all CBSE schools, it will raise the number of centres and will reduce crowding

June 1

FINAL DECISION ON CLASS XII BOARD EXAMINATIONS EXPECTED BY THEN

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPUR • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

EXPRESS CLUSIVE

SIT likely to give Jarkiholi clean chit in sex tape case

MG CHETAN @ Bengaluru

THE Special Investigation Team (SIT), probing the sleaze tape case involving former minister Ramesh Jarkiholi, is most likely to give a clean chit to him. Sources said the SIT will soon submit a 'B' report, which means there is no evidence against him, to the court, putting an end to the case.

Jarkiholi, who was Minister for Water Resources, was made to step down on March 4, after the sleaze tape was released to the media. The issue had created a political storm in the State and an SIT was formed to probe the case.

Police sources said the investigation is over in the case, filed by the woman at the Cubbon Park police station on March 26, accusing Jarkiholi of 'using' her on the pretext of allowing her to shoot a documentary related to his department. The police had registered an FIR against Jarkiholi under Sections 376C (sexual intercourse by a person in authority), 354A (sexual harassment), 504 (provoke breach of the peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 417 (punishment for cheating) of the IPC, and 67A (transmitting material containing a sexually explicit act, etc., in electronic form) of the Information Technology Act.

"No evidence is found against the accused (Jarkiholi) in the case. Investigations revealed that it was the woman who contacted him, made several phone calls and spoke to him provocatively. A detailed analysis of the raw footage has shown that there was no force or harassment as alleged by the woman and it's a consensual act," an officer said.

Besides the sleaze tape, phone call records between Jarkiholi and the woman, and other technical aspects, the SIT also recorded statements of several persons connected to the case. The woman was subjected to several rounds of questioning, while Jarkiholi, who had claimed it's a doctored video and was evasive initially, had recently appeared for enquiry, admitting that he is the man seen in the tape and it was a consensual act. "Based on the findings of the probe, it is clear that Jarkiholi was honey trapped by the woman and her accomplices. A closure report (B report) will be submitted to the court soon," the officer added.

While dropping the charges against Jarkiholi, the SIT will intensify the probe into his complaint filed at the Sadashivanagar police station that the entire episode was a conspiracy against him.

Why you are spending more

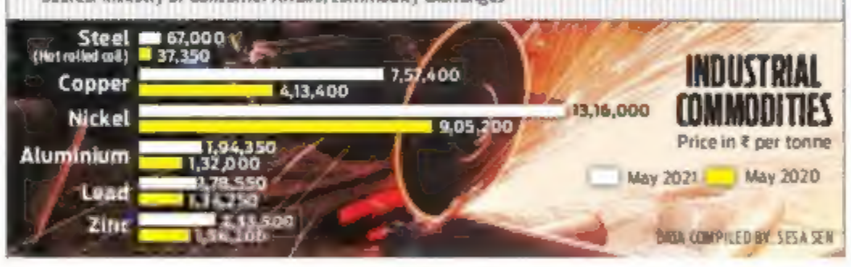
It's not just your grocery bill that has gone up this year after the second deadly wave of the pandemic. The cost of fuel and industrial commodities, too, has gone north, as the accompanying charts show, fuelling inflation

EXPRESS ILLUSTRATION

AVERAGE RETAIL PRICE

Food items	Prices (₹) (As on May 27, 2020)	Prices (₹) (As on May 27, 2021)	% change
Sunflower oil (Packed)	110.94	172.57	55.55
Palm oil (Packed)	87.2	133.24	52.8
Soya oil (Packed)	101.78	151.01	48.38
Mustard oil (Packed)	118.28	168.84	42.75
Vanaspati (Packed)	90.52	128.82	42.31
Loose Tea	220.09	282.59	28.4
Groundnut oil (Packed)	147.51	175.64	19.07
Tur/Arhar dal	93.78	107.84	14.99
Gram dal	67.65	76.75	13.45
Onion	20.69	23.46	13.39
Salt (Iodised)	16.08	17.85	11.01
Masoor dal	77	85.44	10.96
Rice	34.2	35.98	5.2
Milk (1 litre)	46.77	49.17	5.13
Urad dal	103.69	108.68	4.81
Sugar	39.7	39.44	0.71
Tomato	18.9	18.25	-3.44
Gur	48.32	46.03	-4.74
Moong dal	111.66	106.12	-4.96
Atta	31.29	29.3	-6.36
Wheat	28.86	26	-9.91
Potato	25.72	19.16	-25.51

All prices in ₹/kg unless mentioned otherwise
Source: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, commodity exchanges



No GST relief for vax for now, panel to look into it

Group of Ministers to submit its report on or before June 8, decide on any new rates

ANURADHA SHUKLA @ New Delhi

THERE will be no immediate relief on GST over Covid-19 vaccine and medical supplies as the GST Council on Friday left taxes on these unchanged, though it decided to extend duty exemption on import of a medicine used for treatment of black fungus. The Council formed a Group of Ministers (GoM) to decide if any further exemption is required.

"The GoM will submit its report on or before June 8. Any new rates will now be decided by the GoM," FM Nirmala Sitharaman said. Currently, vaccines attract 5% GST.

"The consensus was that before agreeing to fitment committee, a GoM should study if zero rated tax can be levied or formal tax of 0.1%," said sources.

Chhattisgarh commercial tax minister T S Singhdeo said the argument that Input tax credit can be claimed only on those zero-rated goods which are imported or from SEZ is wrong. "This is limited to IGST not CGST. Section 9, 17 and section 52 of the CGST Act say that there is a provision of zero rated tax," he said.

While there will be no immediate relief on GST over various medical surprises, a number of specified Covid-19 related goods such as medical oxygen, oxygen concentrators and other oxygen storage and transportation equipment, certain diagnostic markers test kits and Covid-19 vaccines, will be exempted from IGST.

"The council has decided to exempt the import of relief items even if they are purchased. If these are meant for donating to the government or on recommendation of the state authority to any relief agents. Also. This exemption has been extended till 31st August 2021," Sitharaman said.

Further, in view of rising Black Fungus cases, the above exemption from IGST has been extended to Amphotericin B.

Release ₹11K cr GST dues to State: Bommai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA'S representative in the GST Council and Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Friday requested that pending dues of Rs 11,000 crore in GST compensation to Karnataka be paid immediately.

Bommai, joining the 43rd GST Council meeting headed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman via video-conference on Friday, also requested the council to extend GST compensation to States beyond 2022. Under the current agreement between the GST Council and states, compensation paid to state governments to offset losses arising out of implementing GST ends in 2022.

Pointing to the lockdown that was necessitated because of the Covid second wave this year, Karnataka highlighted an inevitable fall in revenues.

CONTINUED ON: P5

RUMMAGING FOR FOOD

Black kites look for scraps in poultry waste discarded by meat stalls on the outskirts of Mysuru on Friday JUDAYS HANKARS

EXPRESS READ

TNIE reporter manhandled by cop

Madikeri: While covering a story about residents crowding outside the Madikeri Army Canteen to avail the monthly quota of supplies, TNIE Staff Reporter Prajna G R was manhandled by the Madikeri ASI and some other people on Friday morning. A complaint has been filed with the Madikeri Women police station. P5

Twitter yet to follow rules

New Delhi: Google, Facebook and WhatsApp have shared details with the Centre but Twitter is still not following the IT rules, sources said. Twitter has only shared details of a lawyer working in a law firm as their Nodal Contact Person and Grievance Officer, sources added.

KARNATAKA	MAY 27	MAY 28
Fresh cases	24,214	22,823
Recoveries	31,459	52,253
Deaths	476	401

NATIONWIDE	MAY 27	MAY 28
Fresh cases	2,11,298	1,86,364
Recoveries	2,83,135	2,59,459
Deaths	3,847	3,660

GROUND REALITY

Death is a costly affair in Covid pandemic

BOSKY KHANNA @ Bengaluru

EVEN as the government is publicising that cremation of the deceased has been made easy and free, the ground reality is different. Government staffers and BBMP volunteers are offering packages – a new form of bribe – to cremate, which ranges from Rs 30,000-Rs 50,000.

Packages are different, depending on the type of cremation, location of the death (home or hospital) and time taken to cremate. If the death is at a hospital, volunteers call and quote Rs 20,000-Rs 30,000 for an ambulance and waiting charges at the cremation site. After that one has to pay Rs 5,000-Rs 10,000 for the cremation and receipt. Then another Rs 400-Rs 1,000 to collect the ashes and Rs 2,000-Rs 4,000 to the jurisdictional tahsildar (if the cremation is outside BBMP limits). Another Rs 4,000-Rs 5,500 needs to be slipped in for the application for the death certificate before it is downloaded from the e-janma portal.

After all this, one has to wait for up to three weeks to get the death certificate in hand.

If the death is at home, charges vary. The situation worsens if the death has happened at a private hospital as the body will not be released and Form-4 not issued till the hospital bills are cleared and the clerk is given his 'payment' for the form, which ranges from Rs 2,000-Rs 10,000.

This is the ordeal most bereaved citizens are forced to go through, and many do not seek help like Vinay B did from nodal officer in-charge of crematoria, Capt Manivannan.

CONTINUED ON: P6

Soon after my mother's death, I got a call from BBMP volunteers who offered me a ₹20k package for an ambulance and waiting period at the cremation site

Vinay B

24x7 helpline number at +91 8495998495 or send a WhatsApp message to the same number

Interim bail to TMC leaders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kolkata

A five-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on Friday granted interim bail to three Trinamool MLAs, including two ministers, and a former mayor of Kolkata in the Narada sting operation case. Brushing aside Solicitor General Tushar Mehta's apprehension that the accused are influential and could tamper with evidence, the bench said: "The investigation started four years ago. Why the CBI did not arrest the accused in past four years? They were influential when the probe was going on."

Meanwhile, it emerged that a sitting judge of the Calcutta high court wrote on May 24 to the all brother judges questioning the way the case has been handled. "Our conduct is unbecoming of the majesty the HC commands. We have been reduced to a mockery...I am requesting all of us to salvage the situation...(for) re-affirming sanctity of our Rules," the judge said. P8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi holding a cyclone review meeting with Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik; and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's no-show

Mamata skips PM meet, Centre recalls Chief Secy

MANISH ANAND AND PRANAB MONDAL @ New Delhi/Kolkata

THE optics of the first in-person meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi had lined up with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee at Kalaikunda, was as turbulent as cyclone Yaas itself, whose destruction they were expected to review, since the latter skipped the scheduled interaction.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh expressed shock at the no-show, saying Mamata had violated the basic tenets of the Constitution's federal system.

The first fallout was the Centre's order to recall Bengal Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay, whose tenure was extended for three months just four days ago.

Bengal has been asked to send him to the Department of Personnel and Training's office in Delhi by May 31 morning. Mamata has to relieve him first before he can be sent back.

Mamata later met Modi for 15 minutes and presented a sheaf of papers containing the state government's assessment of the cyclone damage. As for the meeting, the presence of the leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari was the trigger for Mamata's anger, as Suvendu had defected from Trinamool to the BJP and defeated her in a tight race in Nandigram.

But the Centre claimed invites to other Opposition leaders like Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Cong) too had gone out. But Adhir expressed his inability to make it as he was in Delhi for a meeting.

However, he told this newspaper that he had been informed about the meeting only around 7.30 am on Friday. "It was not possible for me to attend it at such short notice," he said.

The meeting in Odisha was attended by Chief Minister Navin Patnaik and also by Union ministers Dharmenda Pradhan and P C Sarangi, both hailing from the state.

"The PM and the CM are not individuals, but institutions. Both discharge duties, swearing on the Constitution, for the public welfare. Such behaviour towards the prime minister is painful," said Rajnath.

Modi later announced financial assistance of ₹1,000 crore for Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand.